

MID TERM ASSIGNMENT

Pakistan-Russia-China

Confluence of Civilisations in Central Asia

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Pakistan, Russia , China in Central Asia

Confluence of Civilisation

Abstract.

In the aftermath of US pullout from Afghanistan, the importance of connectivity among the regional states who for all practical purpose are part of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation less Turkmenistan. The importance of Pakistan's role or Indus Civilisation in the Syr Darya and Amu Darya civilisation is the theme of this paper. It analyses the Central Asian Republic in the theoretical lens of Clash of Civilisation; but with the ontology of cooperation, coexistence and good will among civilisations also. It concludes that despite being financially weak , Pakistan can still influence the Trans-Oxiana by virtue of its better education system and sports . paper concludes on the importance of railways and also in using cricket as a tool of foreign policy in interacting with Russia and China.

Introduction.

Central Asia since its birth in 1992 as modern political republics on the model of western democracy have survived all the theoretic perceptions of anarchy , civil war, famine, coups, and a total collapse of the structure . The empirical, historical and theory all predicts chaos in newly independent states. In 1990s in the aftermath of breakup of USSR and its allies like Yugoslavia , gave opportunity to over half a dozen states and nations to take birth; an unprecedented event in history. In the aftermath of WWII a similar phenomenon occurred when British and French colonies were made independent or dominion. Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka (Ceylon) Myanmar (Burma), Vietnam, Malaya are few of the examples. In these western colonies a chaos , civil war, insurgency, ethnic hostilities, ideological warfare of Marxism and capitalism took place. Pakistan being part of western civilisation, a capitalist country became part of the anti-communist block. However it goes to the credit of Pakistan that despite being so close to USA, it opened up relations with China

in late fifties and soon reached an agreement on frontier demarcation , an issue which seems to be the Achilles heel of Chinese politics and foreign policy.

Pakistan never had a good relations with USSR¹ mainly because of its communist and Marxist policies, although very few in Pakistan do understand the difference between these two . One remarkable attribute of Pakistani society was its soft corner for the communist and socialist ideas as expressed through its literature of Manto and Faiz.² In post 1965 War with India-Pakistan, the peace talks were held at Tashkent now capital of Uzbekistan. Pakistan dis received the first of Soviet military equipment in the form of Mi-8 Helicopters and later in post 1971 the Pakistan Steel Mills the biggest industrial project of that era was started and completed with Soviet aid and assistance.

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and subsequent resistance of Mujahedeen created an air of hate and despise among the public in Pakistan and it was only after a decade of war and subsequent breakup of USSR into Russia and Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan , Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, that Pakistanis not only felt a notion of superiority but also a feeling of playing an active role in CARs by virtue of being a bond of history, culture and religion. However, Pakistan's efforts have failed to live upto expectations in terms of economy, trade and connectivity. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)³ was formed in 1995 as Shanghai 5 and later changed into SCO in 2001, with Russia, China and CARs less Turkmenistan as members. Pakistan and India were made members in 2018.

Aim of the paper is to analyse the role of Pakistan in having connectivity with Russia, China in the context of Central Asia.

Methodology ; the theoretical framework of Historicism, the hypothesis of Samuel Huntington Clash of Civilisation, in which the relations among states are perceived in the ontology of a civilisation. It has been widen to show that civilisations not only clash but they also cooperate, interact and maintains

¹ David Christian *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia Volume II, Inner Eurasia from the Mongols Empire to Today 1260-2000*, (NY: Wiley, 2018) pp, 22-67, 76-98.

² Saadat Hassan manto a prolific Urdu writer of early Fifties. Faiz Ahmed Faiz a renowned poet of Pakistan (1900-1978) (NY: Wiley, 2018) pp, 22-67, 76-98.

³ Shanghai Cooperation Organisation SCO official website. <http://eng.sectsc.org/>

mutual beneficial relations. The Realism paradigm of Hans Morgenthau⁴, that every state works or undertakes steps only for its own benefit is now an established fact rather than a mere theory. Within this realism, the role of public perception is quite important because in democracy the public do have the choice and mechanism viable to change the regime, thus power and realism are interlinked with the public mindset.

On a regional connectivity theory, the role of railways as compared to road or air is more paramount. Also within this methodology, the importance and significance of sports in enhancing the public-to-public communication is one of the recent phenomena which is still not fully explained by scholars.

Three Civilisations, past, present and future

Civilisation took birth along rivers thus Indus and Yellow Rivers civilisation are among one of the earliest and more cultured. There was a connectivity among these two civilisation via the Amu Darya and Syr darya River civilisations in Central Asia. Due to geography⁵, the Himalayan mountain divided Indus and Yellow Civilisation and only viable way was through the present day Central Asia. This led to the Silk Route or Caravan trade to start and flourish with trade and ideas going from China in east to the western civilisation through intermediately caravans leading to Mediterranean. There was another trade route which leads from Amu Darya to River Volga the largest river of Europe; both rivers have common water terminus in Caspian sea. But there is little evidence that any major trade was ever carried out between Indus and Volga Civilisations.

Islam overcame Indus and Amu Darya and Syr Darya Civilisation in 800-1000 A.D. Later in 1200 AD Mongols rose to power and devastated not only these civilisations but also that of River Volga, this was the first time in history that all these civilisations were under one power and authority. This empire lasted till 1500 AD with Amir Tamerlane in 1400 AD establishing the very first indigenous Central Asian Empire in which both Rivers (Amu and Syr) were under one rule.

⁴ Moishe Postone ' Critique, state and economy' in *Cambridge Companion to Critical Theory*, ed.(Cambridge: 2012)

⁵ Rafis Abazov *The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of Central Asia* {London: Macmillan, 2008), p-43-76. Also see Christopher Beckworth *Empires of the Silk Road a history of Central Eurasia from Bronze Age to present* . (Princeton University, 2008).

Coincidentally, both Yellow, Indus and Amu and Syr civilisations became part of colonialisations in which more than any other it was Indus Civilisation which was subjugated in totality. By 1875, Volga had annexed Central Asia⁶ and with this the interaction among these three civilisations became distinct. Ideology and politics of western civilisation was the major reason. By 1947, China, India and Pakistan emerged as successor states of old civilisations. Central also remained under Soviet control and got freedom only in 1992.

Thus it can be seen that Pakistan (Indus Civilisation) did not had any constructive relations with Volga (USSR) on the other hand Pakistan had developed good trustworthy relations with China, interestingly , India (Ganges) had almost similar relations with USSR from the onset in 1947 or even before that. One reason was the appeal of communism to the secular Congress party of India.

Present Era.

At present the old ideological conflict is almost over between the USSR and Pakistan , China and Russia were ideological friends from early part of communism however the frontier issue of 1967 had created a rift between them which with the demise of USSR was over. On global stage China has emerged as economic power and Russia after a decline in nineties has roared back to its imperial and colonial mindset seeking rightful place in world community. However the Western Europe ethnic and religious clash with Russia has been a major barrier in the integration of Russia in the European Culture.⁷

Economy is now the cornerstone of all the world super powers and it is this economics which has binds the great civilisation together in SCO. The other issue is the religious extremism in the form of Islamic militancy which is the biggest threat and fear of China and Russia.

In economics the , the main attraction of Russia⁸ was its desire to have a deep port in warm waters of Indian Ocean and only Pakistan or Iran could

⁶ Seymour Becker *Russia Protectorates in Central Asia, Bukhara and Khiva 1865-1924* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp-26, 54, 146.

⁷ Thomas Stephon Eder *China, Russia relations in Central Asia* (Springer , Wien, 2009), p55-78. Also see Craig Oliphant *Russia role in Central Asia* (saferworld, 2013).p-76.

Agata Włodkowska-Bagan *Russian Foreign Policy towards Central Asia*
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261402477>

⁸ Fritz Ermorin *Russia's strategic culture , past, present and in transition* (USA Congress Document, 31 October 2006) also see Faisal Javaid

provide this . Gwador sea port is the one of world's deep sea port and it is the shortest link from Russian federation to the warm waters via Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan –Afghanistan- Pakistan to Indian Ocean. A good rail link can facilitate Russian trade. The other factor is the Pakistan-India rivalry and hostility in the region thus Pakistan does not allow any trade overland between India and Central Asia onwards to Russia.

Geography of China is as such that its western region of Sinkiang and inner Mongolia are more close to Gwador than Shanghai thus importance of Pakistan is there for the other two superpowers and civilisation.⁹

What Benefit Pakistan can have from this interaction ? is the question which invariably arise whenever any discussion on this issue is taken place in Pakistan. Apparently so far Pakistan has gained nothing of importance . Pakistan trade is still marginal with china (under 1 Billion US \$)as compared to over 23 Billion \$ with USA and over 10 Billion \$ with European Union. Thus economically this relationship has to be matured to be a useful instrument.

Railways.

British and Russian colonists built railways in sub continent and Central Asia, thus bringing the industrial revolution to the ancient civilisations. Railways not only became a tool of capitalism but also a tool of cultural connectivity and this is precisely what is required now from Pakistan perspective. A good railway network which is already in operation , the only missing link is Peshawar-Kabul-Tirmiz¹⁰ Railways which is an initiative of

RUSSIAN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SECURITY INTERESTS IN CENTRAL ASIAN REGION: A STUDY. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348326957>

⁹ Barry Naughton *The Chinese Economy transition and growth.* (MIT: London, 2007).p-76,89, 117, 233.

¹⁰"[Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway map signed in Tashkent](#)". *Pajhwok*. 3 Feb 2021.

^ "[Uzbekistan Prioritizes Pakistani Over Iranian Ports](#)". *The Diplomat*. February 16, 2021.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/afghanistan-uzbekistan-pakistan-ink-map-for-rail-link/2131605>.

Pakistan, Afghanistan & Uzbekistan Agree 573km Connecting Railway

<https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2021/03/05/pakistan-afghanistan-uzbekistan-agree-573km-connecting-railway/>

Uzbekistan and is outside the perimeters of OBOR or CPEC yet very much part of SCO umbrella.¹¹

The financial sponsorship of China and technical and material expertise of Russia can make this project a realisation. Thus Pakistan's main effort should be to convince the other two super powers .

Internally and domestically Pakistan urgently needs to adopt a paradigm shift in its strategy, now railways take precedence over other issue like restructuring of PIA. For next half decade railways should have double track from Peshawar – Karachi and simultaneously the linking of Gwador Seaport with main railway line running between Quetta – Zahidan (Iran).¹²

The best part is that there are already railway tracks along the frontier as Quetta- Zhob and also Kohat- Thal, then Peshawar- Landi Kotal, and between Mardan- Dargai. The Frontier Policy was based upon railways and garrisons, in the present the concept of garrison has changed but the validity of railways as a means of trade, connectivity, cultural fusion and the vast range of railways that are spread in Asia. The railway lines which are under consideration apart from Termiz-Kabul-Peshawar (573 Kilometres) is the Turkmenistan-Kandahar-Chaman.¹³

Conclusion.

International politics and regional dynamics have brought all the major powers of the region, they are all part of SCO, yet Pakistan still has much to achieve by interaction with Russia and China. Aim is not security but economics and for this railways are fundamental. Pakistan needs urgently to focus on improving its railways infrastructure and also press upon other two powers to facilitate the proposed railway through Kabul. This will also help the Russia trade and with the passage of time , most likely Pakistan will also agree on opening up the railways with India. As Russia and Central Asia also looks forward towards the one billion people economy of India.

¹¹ Shigeru Otsuka 'Central Asian Railways and Europe–Asia Land Bridge' *Japan Railway & Transport Review* No. 28 (pp.42–49)

¹² Pakistan railways official website. <http://www.railways.gov.pk/>

¹³ 30 Kilometers railway line from Andkhoy to Afghanistan was inaugurated on 14th January 2021. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/afghanistan-turkmenistan-launch-connectivity-projects/2109837>